

Governor's Proposed FY23 Budget Adjustments
Appropriations Hearing
HB 5037 AAC the State Budget for the Biennium Ending June 30th, 2023
Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services
Thursday, February 24th, 2022

Good afternoon Senator Osten, Representative Walker, Senator Hartley, Representative Dathan, Representative Nolan, Senator Miner, Representative France, and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee.

My name is Xavier Aquino and I am a registered voter in city of Bridgeport.

I have worked under the DMHAS umbrella since 2015. First, I worked for a substance abuse program, which led me to a case manager position in a 20-unit Supportive Housing Program. There I learned just how enmeshed both substance abuse and mental health are. My interest became more focused on the mental health aspect so I began working at Bridge House in the beginning of 2021. Immediately my eyes were opened to the great impact mental health programs have in general and Bridge House more specifically on those who have mental health conditions. I am a case manager and generalist at Bridge House. I work in the culinary unit covering both the kitchen and snack bar. I see the true interest, satisfaction, and enjoyment the members have who are involved in the making of the meals and serving them.

When my work day is over, I go home with a sense of great satisfaction. I feel like I can align myself with the mission of this psycho-social work order day program which serves those with mental health conditions. I feel that I am making a difference in the lives of the most deserving population. I have seen the devastating impact on real lives with budget cuts in the past. Therefore, I am asking you to increase the current funding for our mission to increase the quality of life for those with mental health challenges. Thank you.